

1259551

Registered provider: Semi-independent House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation runs this home. It provides care for up to five children who have experienced trauma and have complex needs. There were two children living at the home at the time of the inspection, and two children were spoken to.

There has been no registered manager since October 2024.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
25/05/2021	Full	Good
06/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were two children living at the home at the time of this inspection. One child has moved out of the home and no children have moved into the home since the last inspection. Two children spoke to the inspector.

Children are making progress in their education. When children have faced challenge or setbacks in education, the home proactively advocates for children. This means children access education with support tailored to their needs. Staff encouraged children to persevere with their education and support children to engage in developing age-appropriate independence skills.

Staff are open and honest with children, which helps to build positive and trusting relationships. They have a good understanding of children's needs. Staff work closely with external agencies to support children with health and well-being concerns.

Positive, warm and nurturing interactions were observed between the children and staff, with lots of laughter throughout the inspection. The children are very comfortable in the company of the staff team and have built good relationships with the staff.

Children's bedrooms are personalised to their tastes and liking, and children also have a say in how the home is designed and decorated. Children enjoy the activities that are offered to them and speak positively about them. When asked what they like about the home, a child said, 'The food and the staff; I wouldn't change anything about the home.'

Children engage in children's meetings. However, records lack detail, which means further opportunities to explicitly capture children's views, wishes and feelings are missed.

Staff have a designated smoking area on site that is in view of the children, which does not demonstrate that a good, healthy lifestyle is being role modelled to the children.

Where safe and appropriate, the staff work hard to ensure that when children see their families, this time is meaningful. This means children can maintain links with those who are important to them.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff have undertaken the organisation's mandatory safeguarding training. They are confident in their roles of reporting and escalating any child protection concerns, and they understand the whistle-blowing policy. Staff have a good understanding of the

children and their risks; they are sensitive in how they approach and support children to identify and understand the risks posed to them.

Missing-from-care incidents are rare. When children go missing, staff are quick to respond. Partnership work with the police is effective, and staff actively ensure that the children return home as soon as possible. However, children are not always offered return home interviews. This means that opportunities are missed to understand why children go missing and to reduce these incidents. Furthermore, on some occasions, leaders and managers have not reviewed incidents and consequences to identify learning.

The children's guide is child-friendly and gives children a sense of what it is like living at the home. The guide also contains details of who children can speak to if they are worried or if they need support outside of the home. Staff go through this with children when they first move in to ensure they understand the external agencies that are available to them.

Children say they feel safe living at the home, and children can identify several staff they would speak to if they have worries or concerns. There have been no physical interventions, complaints or allegations made against staff.

Feedback from professionals was positive about the care that is provided to children. A social worker said they were happy with how their child is safeguarded and that staff have a good understanding of risk management.

The safe recruitment systems for staff are comprehensive. This helps to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager deregistered with Ofsted in October 2024. The deputy manager has been appointed as the interim manager, and they were present during the inspection, supported by the head of care and area manager.

The manager is enthusiastic, and she speaks with commitment and dedication about the children. She is ambitious for children and has a good understanding of their needs. She is child-centred and regularly spends quality time with the children. Children said that they would talk to the manager if they had any worries. Staff spoke positively about the care and support that are provided to children.

Feedback from external professionals was positive. A professional said, 'Communication is very good. They [staff] know what they are doing; they have been very supportive with a child's transition into college.'

Leaders and managers complete annual reviews of the premises. However, they do not consult with relevant agencies as part of their review process. This means

opportunities are missed to identify risks to children in the local area and strategies to mitigate these risks.

The manager regularly consults with children, professionals and parents. However, they have not ensured they always have the children's most up-to-date local authority plans.

Staff undertake a wide range of training, which includes therapeutic training. Staff benefit from regular one-to-one supervision and annual appraisals and say they feel listened to and supported by the manager.

Staff benefit from monthly reflective meetings. Team meetings encourage discussion and provide staff with safeguarding scenarios to develop their understanding of keeping children safe. Staff also benefit from consultations with the home's therapeutic intervention trainer.

Some staff hold a relevant qualification, and those who do not are working towards completing one. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to care for children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, ensure that: all incidents and consequences given to children are reviewed to evaluate the impact on children and where possible inform future practice; when conducting the review of the premises, the registered person consults, and takes into account the views of, each relevant person.	29 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children benefit from a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Staff should seek to meet children's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. In particular, they should ensure that staff do not smoke on site or in view of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Information provided by such interviews should be considered when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. In particular, the registered person should ensure that children are routinely offered return home interviews after missing-from-care incidents. The interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged by staff to contribute to the home's records in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. In particular, they should ensure that children's participation in children's meetings is clearly recorded and that they capture the views, wishes and feelings of the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they 'seek to involve' the placing authority that places a looked-after child in the home, which in practice means working primarily with their statutory social worker. In particular, they should ensure that there are no delays in obtaining updated care plans from the local authority after children's care review meetings have taken place. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.5)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under The Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1259551

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Semi-independent House Limited

Registered provider address: 51 Ploverly, Peterborough PE4 6HZ

Responsible individual: Amanda Charlie

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anver Rose, Social Care Inspector

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